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27 March 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

***Laos:** Moscow's first comment on President Kennedy's press conference and the present situation in Laos appears designed to retain flexibility of action while pressing for its basic demands. By emphasizing the "urgent" need for an international conference, but taking no stand on the question of a prior cease-fire and ICC meeting, Moscow has left itself free to accept these Western proposals if its proposals on the composition, timing, and agenda for the international meeting, which are expected to be presented by Gromyko, are accepted by the West.

Although the Chinese Communists have not yet made any comment of their own on the press conference, Peiping has broadcast a North Vietnamese editorial of 25 March expressing Hanoi's opposition to a cease-fire before an international conference. The editorial declares that "only a Geneva-type conference or an enlarged conference will be competent to settle questions of a cease-fire and reactivation of the International Commission in Laos."

The bloc has not yet reported the shooting down of an American C-47 aircraft over the Plaine des Jarres on 23 March.

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Congo: Foreign Minister Bomboko has sent a letter to the UN's acting representative in the Congo, Makki Abbas, inviting the UN to send technicians to Matadi to cooperate with the port authority in clearing up the backlog of UN supplies there. Bomboko's letter added that the government could not authorize the return of UN troops to Matadi because of the feelings of the population. [Ambassador Timberlake reports that the pile-up of supplies at the port was due to the failure of the UN to issue shipping instructions. The UN is reported to have rejected an offer by a local shipping firm and the port authority to assume joint responsibility for forwarding UN merchandise to Leopoldville. Timberlake believes the return of civilians to Matadi would involve a minimum risk of incidents. He also believes the climate of relations between the UN and the Congolese has "changed radically" since the arrival of Abbas in mid-March but that Abbas has not yet been able to capitalize on it because of the expected return of Dava]

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Angola: [Angolan dissident leaders, encouraged by the response of the African population to their terrorist campaign in northern Angola, believe they can continue their activities indefinitely, although on a reduced scale.

New outbreaks would probably be accompanied by additional demonstrations against Americans in Angola; rumors

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[redacted]
linking local Americans with the terrorism are still being
given wide circulation there. [redacted]
[redacted]

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Afghanistan-Pakistan-USSR: Foreign Minister Naim told Ambassador Byroade on 26 March that "major fighting" has broken out between Pakistani military units and several dissident Pushtoon tribes on the Pakistani side of the Afghan-Pakistani frontier. The action reportedly is taking place in the same semiautonomous tribal area where clashes occurred last fall. Pakistani authorities recently have been trying to suppress localized tribal resistance there--in part Afghan inspired--and to extend their control over the border areas. A widespread tribal uprising within Pakistan probably would draw active support from related tribal groups on the Afghan side. [redacted]

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Situation in Laos (Situation as of 0400 EST)

Moscow has consistently avoided committing itself on whether an international conference would have to meet before a cease-fire could become operative. It has at various times called for reactivation of the International Control Commission for Laos, but has always specified that this body could not resume its activities in Laos without new directives from a conference. On 22 March, however, Moscow broadcast without comment Souvannah Phouma's suggestion that a cease-fire could be arranged by the ICC pending the convocation of an international conference.

The Pravda article maintains this careful avoidance of the question of timing, while heavily emphasizing the dangers of international conflict through the "intervention" of SEATO and the United States and the consequent urgency of an international conference. By driving home the point that it has long favored a conference, Moscow has put itself in position to claim that the convocation of a conference and a cessation of hostilities is a consequence of its initiatives and another example of the ability of the "Socialist camp" to prevent "aggression" by the imperialists.

Accompanying its charges that SEATO members are preparing for direct military action in Laos, Pravda warns that "peace-loving countries will not remain indifferent" to direct intervention by SEATO which could lead to "far reaching consequences." A more explicit threat has been made in the presence of US Ambassador Ravndal in Prague by the Czech Deputy Foreign Minister. Responding to a remark from the Indian Ambassador, the Czech stated: "If the United States invades Laos, members of the Warsaw Pact have decided to enter Laos in return."

Peiping has not yet commented on President Kennedy's press conference on Laos, although, the Chinese Communists have broadcast a substantial account of his remarks. Peiping's last comment suggesting its disapproval of a cease-fire before an international conference is convened was contained in a People's Daily article of 23 March. Since then there have been only hints that its attitude remains the same. The first

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negative reaction to such a cease-fire appeared in an editorial on 25 March in the North Vietnamese newspaper, Nhan Dan. The paper accuses the US of putting the "cart before the horse" in order to gain time to strengthen "rebel" forces. Peiping has reported this editorial without adding comments of its own. [REDACTED]

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[The King and General Phoumi have reacted favorably to latest Western moves toward a peaceful settlement of the Laotian crisis. Both, however, expressed concern that Laos' problems would be subordinated to other world issues in a 14-nation conference. Phoumi had reservations about a return of the International Control Commission to Laos on the grounds that this would effectively prevent Western aid to the Laotian Army, while bloc supply of the Pathet Lao would go unchecked.]

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[Rumors in Vientiane that the city is in imminent danger of attack were probably circulated by Communists. The departure of the King, prime minister, and Phoumi to attend a long-scheduled national ceremony in Savannakhet may have strengthened the rumors. The royal party will remain there until 28 March. The credibility attributed to these rumors by the populace is indicative of the low morale in Vientiane. Since 1 March about 200 troops have deserted in the area.] [REDACTED]

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The military situation north and south of the Phou Khoun junction of Routes 7 and 13 is relatively unchanged. The enemy maintains his hold on the southern approach to the Plaine des Jarres and is exerting pressure on government troops at Tha Thom. [REDACTED]

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[Five companies of Laotian Army troops under the command of Colonel Kham Ouane Boupha are reportedly en route from Phong Saly to join army forces at the outpost of Muong Sai in Luang Prabang Province. Since the Kong Le coup, this commander has maintained a precarious "neutrality" between all factions in the crisis and has entered into at least informal working relations with Pathet Lao troops who control most of]

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[Phong Saly. [redacted] Kham Ouane's
[redacted] move was precipitated by fears the Pathet Lao were about to
arrest him.]

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The Situation in the Congo

In Stanleyville, Gizenga told a press correspondent that his regime was based on positive neutralism and would accept unconditional aid from any source. He said, however, that practically nothing had been forthcoming and that of the 20 countries which had recognized his government, only ten had done so in writing. He added that his government would respect present and future foreign investments, and claimed his troops would be willing to surrender their arms to the UN if this would lead to "republican legality." He disclaimed being a Marxist, saying that he had never studied Marxism and that although he had visited Moscow as recently as 1960, he had spent more time in Western capitals and had twice been to the United States.

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The Malayan UN commander in Kindu has been able to establish contact with the "Leopard men" in southwestern Kivu

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Province. This secret group, founded six months ago by Lumumba, is supposedly anti-Christian and anti-white but now is "running out of steam," and its members are willing to return to their homelands in northern Katanga.

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The Situation in Angola

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[In Portugal itself, the government-controlled press is reported to have called for a demonstration in downtown Lisbon today to protest recent international criticism of Portugal. Right wing elements led by the National Front reportedly plan to turn the demonstration into a march on the US Embassy, and, according to press reports, thousands of handbills calling for such action have already been distributed in the city.]

[REDACTED] opinion in some regime circles is beginning to turn against the government, however, as a result of the Angolan situation and many persons are criticizing the government for not having taken measures some time ago that would have avoided the present difficulties.

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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On 23 March the undersecretary of the Overseas Ministry told the American Embassy in Lisbon that for the past six months, the government had been actively studying far-reaching reforms in all sectors of the overseas provinces. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Fighting Breaks Out in Pakistan Near Afghan Border

Guerrilla fighters from three of the major Bajauri tribes--the Salarzai, Utman Khel, and Mamund--reportedly have been engaged against Pakistani troops since 24 March. If this resistance continues, the powerful Mohmand tribe may join its neighbors. Other Pushtoon tribes, such as the Wazirs, might also lend their support and further extend the area of fighting. All the tribes, whose area extends on both sides of the border, want to remain relatively free of government control and resent Pakistani Government moves since last September to strengthen control over Bajaur. If the present fighting should become widespread, it would so deepen the antagonism between these tribes and Pakistan that the latter would be forced to suspend its efforts to bring the Pushtoon tribes all along the frontier under its administrative control.

The fighting in Bajaur follows recent moves by Afghanistan to strengthen its regular forces at the border opposite the area. In discussing this build-up with the American Army attaché in Karachi, the director of Pakistan's joint military intelligence said that the Pakistani Army would actually welcome the chance to defeat Afghan intruders again--whether tribal irregulars or Afghan Army units--and reiterated his government's determination to use whatever force is necessary to maintain its position in Bajaur.

Kabul, fearful of strong Pakistani counteraction, probably does not plan to send readily identifiable Afghan forces across the border. While it may be giving covert assistance in the form of arms and tribal "volunteers," the Afghan Government wants the fighting to appear to involve only the "oppressed" Pushtoon tribesmen on the Pakistani side of the line and the Pakistani Government.

Afghanistan would like to bring the matter before the United Nations to generate international pressure on Pakistan to negotiate the status of the Pushtoon tribes living in Pakistan. Kabul, however, probably calculates that open Afghan intervention would merely strengthen the Pakistani case in the eyes of the UN General Assembly.

The USSR probably would not be happy to see the Pushtoonistan issue come to a head again at this time. Moscow has made a

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small but impressive beginning toward achieving a more favorable position in Pakistan. Support for Afghanistan, however, would result in a decline in this position.

Khrushchev is on record in support of the Afghan position on Pushtoonistan, and in the event of a military clash between the Afghans and Pakistanis, it is probable that the USSR would feel that it had to give increasing propaganda support to Afghanistan.

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